



July, 1981

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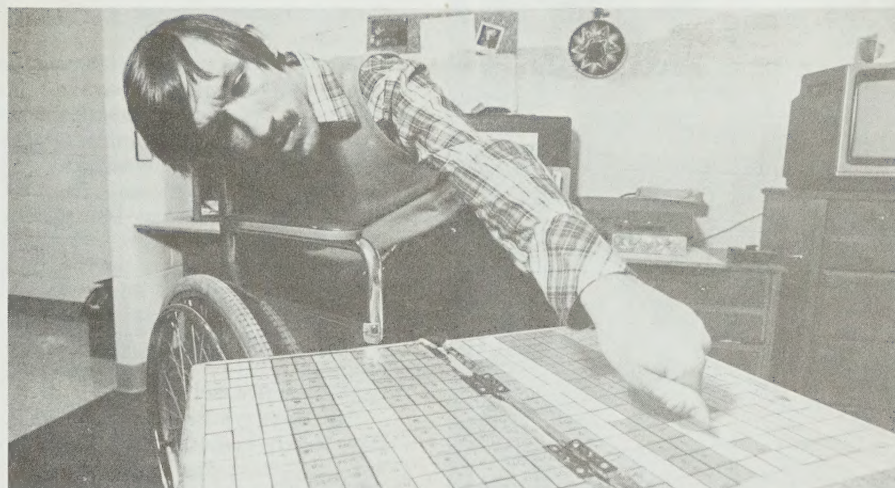
Blissymbols are keeping up with the "Times"

Russell Cecchini, 28, of Participation House in Hamilton may be the first Blissymbol user to take on the job of a newspaper editor.

Russell produces the new Symbol Users' Newspaper, available to all Blissymbol users who are associate members or subscribers. Russell gathers, edits and writes material for the publication. He includes articles written by other symbol users as well as his own editorials and features.

The first issue was published by BCI in March, 1981. Response was outstanding from symbol users, professionals and parents. In fact, BCI even received requests for a reprint. The next issue is being prepared now and should be out mid or late summer.

To create the first issue, Russell submitted stories in typed form to the BCI Symbol Office who translated the text into Blissymbols. When this task was complete, the assembled issue was sent to Russell for final approval. He returned it to the BCI's editor for production.



Russ Cecchini, newspaper editor.

The actual ink-on-paper process was handled by the Ontario Crippled Children's Centre's in-house printing operation and circulation was managed by BCI staff.

Modern Methods

That typewriters are obsolete in the offices of many newspapers is probably not news to most readers. Now, reporters type their stories directly onto a special keyboard connected to a tv screen, technically referred to as a video display terminal or VDT. All editing is done directly on the VDT.

Russell Cecchini's Symbol Users' Newspaper is not very far behind the times. Russell now has access to a Blissterminal and the upcoming issue of the publication will be produced using this modern technology. While the Blissterminal is not operated by a keyboard, there is a tv-like screen involved. The symbols and words appear automatically on a print-out.

If all goes well, the "print-out" version

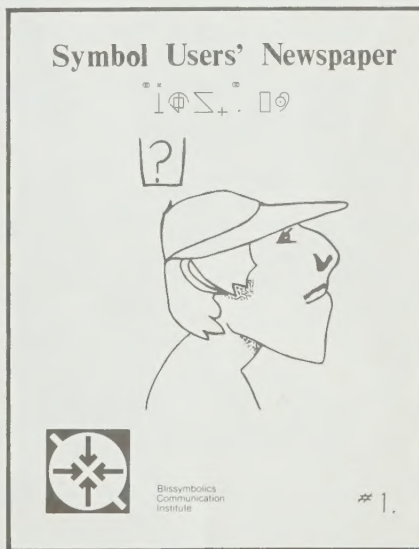
of the newspaper will go straight to press. This saves a great deal of time and effort and utilizes Russell's skill on the terminal. Everyone is very anxious for the next issue of the paper to appear.

Like most editors, Russell is always looking for good stories and people to write them. He urges all symbol users to contribute to the newspaper. Material should be submitted to:

Russell Cecchini
Participation House
R.R. 1
Binbrook, Ont.
L0R 1C0

I, me	hope	I, me	have	this	machine
↓	↑	↓	±	✓	⊗
in	future	for	good		
□		>>	♥ +!		

Sample of print-out from Blissterminal.



Cover of the first issue.

1.

The Breakthrough arrives



How does one find the inspiration to make a film?

The Breakthrough co-producers, Ira Levy and Peter Williamson, became motivated several years ago, following their first upsetting yet exciting encounter with Dennis, a young Blissymbol user from the UK who uses eye-pointing to access Blissymbols. Peter and Ira were so impressed with the boy's breakthrough in communication that they dedicated their film to him.

About one year ago, Lauron Productions Ltd. began filming The Breakthrough, a sensitive, 45-minute documentary portraying the lives of three young, cerebral palsied Blissymbol users. Today, six months into the International Year, The Breakthrough is complete and has been viewed by several audiences in North America and the UK.

The three symbol users featured in the film, Wendy Ferguson, Paul Marshall and Sue Odell, have experienced as near to celebrity status as they probably ever dreamed possible. Now, with the documentary scheduled for extensive public viewing, there is no doubt that The Breakthrough will assume a monumental place in the lives of these three young Canadians.

The film itself is divided into three separate stories, each focusing on one Blissymbol user.

Of the three users, Wendy Ferguson of Hamilton, Ontario, is the youngest at 11 years of age. Despite Wendy's severe disability, the Fergusons choose to keep her at home rather than place her in an institution. The Breakthrough illustrates Wendy's warm and supportive family environment and shows the pleasure and freedom afforded her by Blissymbol communication.

Paul Marshall, also of the Hamilton area, is 18 and chooses to attend regular public high school. This is an important decision for Paul because, while he is mobile and the least physically disabled of the three users in the film, he must cope with, in addition to his disability, all the usual problems accompanying adolescence. The Breakthrough shows Paul communicating with Blissymbols in various social and classroom settings.

Ira and Peter found an almost made-to-measure story of courage and perseverance when they met Mrs. Sue

Odell, a 28 year-old widow and resident of a private hospital near Toronto. The candid yet sensitive presentation of Sue's marriage and the death of her husband is one of the most moving segments of the film.

Though the Breakthrough concentrates on only three Blissymbol users, many others were involved in the making of the film. Some actually appear on screen, while others do not. Over the 23 days of filming had to be edited down to 45 minutes, Peter Williamson explains that it was impossible to include all participants in the final product. Peter emphasizes, however, that both he and Ira are extremely grateful to everyone who helped and took part in the creation of the film.

The introduction and most of the narration is dramatically delivered by Nabil Shaban, a professional actor and disabled individual from Britain. Ira and Peter met Nabil while filming at the International Congress held in Winnipeg last summer. They later asked him to return to Canada for additional shooting and recording.

BCI assisted in raising funds for The Breakthrough and, over the past year, has participated in a consultative role. However, the end result, including all the creative work behind it, must be credited solely to the film-makers.

While Lauron had final say on matters related to ideas, content, and script, Peter and Ira courteously held a pre-release screening of the film for all those who appeared in it. This was most appreciated by the participants.

Recent viewings

Seeing oneself on film for the first time can be a startling experience, but Sue, Wendy, and Paul are quite accustomed to it now and have been able to relax and enjoy several public showings of The Breakthrough.

A Toronto premiere of the film was held at the Ontario Crippled Children's Centre, May 13. An audience of about 100 attended, including symbol users, friends, family, Centre and BCI staff, and professionals. The evening was a very warm and special event for everyone.

On May 29, the Canadian Mission to the United Nations sponsored a New York debut of the film. At first, the financial implications of a trip to New York were discouraging for Wendy, Sue, Paul and their families. However, with generous community, agency and corporate support, all three made it to the Big Apple.

Carol Barrett, BCI communications officer, accompanied Sue Odell to the UN showing and reports that despite a short, cramped and hectic visit, the experience was unforgettable. Madam Dupuy, wife of the Canadian Ambassador, introduced the film which was followed by a brief wine and cheese reception.

Overall, response to The Breakthrough has been very positive. What can be guaranteed about the film is that no viewers leave it feeling bored, indifferent or unaffected. Everyone seems to react to The Breakthrough in some way.

During the International Year, many films will surface in the attempt to increase public awareness of the disabled. Once The Breakthrough is seen widely, there is no doubt that the general population will learn a little more about the communicatively-disabled. It is also likely that fewer people will ask, "What on earth are Blissymbols?"

BCI gains new film for training

Another exciting offshoot from the making of The Breakthrough is a brand new BCI training film titled Now I Can Speak.

In close consultation with BCI, Lauron produced a 20-minute instructional film, using material from The Breakthrough and shooting extra footage as required. Now I Can Speak will become a regular component of BCI elementary training sessions.

This film is not intended as a "how-to" device but as a catalyst for discussion and an illustration of Blissymbol communication in various settings and circumstances.

BCI feels that Now I Can Speak will provide an extremely valuable audio-visual aid to elementary training and, so far, response to the film supports this feeling.

BCI is not acting as distributor for these films. Anyone interested in renting or purchasing them should contact:

Kathleen Shea
Cinema Concepts International
93 Scollard St.
Toronto, Ont.
M5R 1G4

New Directions

Realism forms key to BCI's future focus

by Shirley McNaughton

During the past several months, BCI has been faced with growing financial concerns. Although we have had valuable support through a substantial grant from the Easter Seal Society of Ontario, earnings from our instructional materials and training sessions, and generous support services from OCC, BCI must reduce its expenditures and expand its financial resources in order to avoid a deficit in 1981 and future years.

After carefully examining BCI's functions and evaluating those which its resources allow it to perform well, it has

been decided that BCI will alter the focus of its activities.

Beginning July 1, 1981, BCI will concentrate its efforts upon (1) research and development relating to augmentative communication and the system and application of Blissymbolics, (2) service to the residents of Ontario, as provided through the Blissymbolics Communication Service of the Ontario Crippled Children's Centre and (3) the training of Blissymbol instructors.

Several effects of this change in emphasis will be:

1. BCI will give high priority to the initiation of and the provision of Blissymbol consultation to research proposals which will contribute to the ongoing development of Blissymbolics as a communication system for the communicatively handicapped.
2. BCI and CCS will strengthen their communication links and utilize their common resources to ensure the continued growth of service to Blissymbol users of Ontario.
3. Training alternatives will be examined and new formats will be offered to meet the needs of Blissymbol users in Ontario.
4. Internationally, BCI will participate along with other well-established centres to assist, as resources allow, those countries developing new Blissymbol programs.

We hope that, in realistically evaluating what can be done with the resources available, BCI will continue to make a worthwhile contribution to the world-wide effort to enhance the communication capability of those with a communication handicap.

As specific changes to BCI activities are implemented, they will be announced in the Bulletin.

BCI celebrates 10th anniversary

BCI is planning a very special event to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the first application of Blissymbolics as a communication system for the non-speaking.

Ten years ago this fall several professionals at the Ontario Crippled Children's Centre began using Blissymbols with a group of non-verbal, cerebral palsied children. The rest is history.

It is only fitting that the many individuals who have been involved with symbols over the years should have an opportunity to meet, reminisce, and partake in good cheer. Therefore, BCI will hold a get-together sometime in October.

Details will follow in the next issue of the Bulletin.

Special thanks

BCI wishes to express its gratitude to the many organizations, corporations and individuals who contributed funds to the Institute during the period January - December, 1980. Your generous support of our efforts to meet the needs of Blissymbol users continues to be felt into 1981.

BCI Annual Report

BLISSYMBOLICS COMMUNICATION INSTITUTE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1980

	Year ended December 31, 1980
	\$
REVENUE	
Easter Seal Society	200,815
Grants	5,000
Income from materials, training and associate membership fees	285,518
Donations	1,799
	493,132
EXPENDITURE	
Operational expenses	197,572
Materials, training and associate membership fee expenses	295,560
	493,132
NET REVENUE FOR THE YEAR	-

Branches: London, UK; Adelaide, Australia; Edmonton, Canada; London, Ontario, Canada; Quebec, Canada; Albuquerque, California, Florida, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin, Australia, Denmark, France, India, Israel, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom.

Use the code: Tel: (416) 425-7635, Telex: 240007, BCI 13.

News from Training

SPECIAL INTEREST WORKSHOP

Applications are now available for the Special Interest Workshop to be held in Toronto, October 20-22. This year's workshop will focus on the use of Blissymbols with the mentally retarded and multi-handicapped. The fee for the workshop is \$200.00, Canadian funds.

UPDATE: A GOOD IDEA

Participants in the Special Interest Workshop may choose to take advantage of the one-day Update session on October 19. This may prove a valuable and convenient combination. The fee for Associate Members is \$15.00, Canadian Funds. The cost for non-members is \$25.00, Canadian funds.

UPDATE WORKSHEETS

1981 update worksheets and certifying exam are now available to elementary workshop participants who received their training prior to June 1980.

CORRESPONDENCE — WORKSHOP COURSE

In co-operation with BCI, Dr. Eugene McDonald has developed a Correspondence — Workshop course. This program consists of four correspondence lessons followed by a two-day workshop session. The course finishes with a fifth correspondence lesson, including the BCI elementary exam.

Dr. McDonald has scheduled two of these courses for the remainder of 1981. One will be held in Philadelphia during the period of September through December. The other is planned for August through November and will take place in Los Angeles. The two-day Los Angeles workshop sessions

will be held on November 18 and 19 to complement the ASHA convention.

Anyone wishing to host or attend a Correspondence — Workshop course should contact:

Dr. E. McDonald
Home of the Merciful Savior
4400 Baltimore Ave.
Philadelphia, Pa. 19104

THREE-DAY ELEMENTARY TRAINING SESSIONS

The following elementary training programs are scheduled for the balance of 1981.

Halifax, N.S.
Toronto, Ont.
Sioux Falls, S.D.
Mississauga, Ont.
Valhalla, N.Y.
St. John's, Nfld.
Las Vegas, Nev.
Washington, D.C.
New Orleans, L.A.
Orlando, Fla.
San Jose, Calif.

Please direct any enquiries regarding attending or hosting any training programs to Sue Cook, Workshop Coordinator, BCI Training Department.



Horse meets Blissymbol user Dwayne Houle at an Easter Seal resident camp in Ontario.
photographer: Dianne Mackie

Report on Tech for Blissymbols

Shirley McNaughton attended a conference on technology for Blissymbolics, held May 14 and 15 at the University of Surrey.

The conference, co-sponsored by the Biological Engineering Society and the UK Blissymbolics Communication Resource Centre, brought together engineers and rehabilitation professionals from the UK, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium, U.S.A., Canada, and France.

The papers given related to all aspects of technology pertaining to Blissymbolics and working groups were organized to cover three topics: assessment aids, teaching aids, and the development of a BLISSCII code. In addition, both commercial and non-commercial displays

were set up and available throughout the two days.

Communication aids ranged from raised symbols on rubber mats, to a scanning group-communication display, to synthetic speech, to Blissymbols on CRT screens.

The results of the BLISSCII code working session will provide Blissymbol users of the future with a valuable capability. This five-hour session, chaired by Gregg Vanderheiden, Director, Trace Centre, Madison, Wisconsin, involved ten professional engineers and dealt with the development of a set of criteria for a standard code for transmitting Blissymbol messages from one aid to another. The code is being modelled on the American

Standard Code for Information Interchange (ASCII).

Follow-up work on the BLISSCII code will be undertaken by Gregg Vanderheiden and Frederick Moell, Handikappensinstitutet, Stockholm, at the Rehabilitation Engineering Society of North America's annual meeting to be held in Washington in August, 1981. BCI looks forward to working on and later disseminating information about BLISSCII to developers of Blissymbol aids.

Proceedings of the conference are being prepared so the information can be shared with a broad readership. We will announce in the Bulletin when they are available.

Up & Coming

The Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC) is coordinating a series of cross-country seminars during 1981. The purpose of the seminars is to help employers, unions and community groups improve employment opportunities for disabled persons.

The remaining seminars, still in the planning stages, will be held in Winnipeg and Ottawa in September, Quebec City in October, and Edmonton and Calgary in November.

Interested groups are urged to designate a representative and contact the CHRC for further information and firm dates and locations at they become available. Please contact:

Dieter Schachhuber
257 Slater Street
Ottawa, Ont.
K1A 1E1
(613) 995-5504

The Canadian Rehabilitation Council for the Disabled has published the second edition of *Rehabilitation Treatment Centres for Physically Disabled Persons* in Canada. The new edition contains 12 new entries, bringing the total number of Centres listed to 70.

This text should be of particular

interest to professionals and disabled persons. In addition to describing treatment centres that provide rehabilitation services to the physically disabled, the second edition offers more specific information on current research projects.

The directory is available free of charge to physically disabled persons. The usual cost is three dollars, including postage. Any orders totalling less than six dollars must be prepaid.

Individuals interested in receiving this text should contact:

Heather Jones
CRCD
Suite 2110
One Yonge Street
Toronto, Ont.
M5E 1E5

In support of the International Year, General Publishing Co. Ltd. has published two special books, *The Wheelchair Gourmet* and *Aids To Make You Able*.

These books are not only aimed at disabled readers but should also serve as resource texts for health professionals, parents, and friends.

The Wheelchair Gourmet is by Mary Blakeslee, herself a disabled person. The author of *Aids To Make You Able* is by

Wendy M. Davis, an occupational therapist who lives and works in Edmonton.

Unfortunately, BCI cannot provide readers with reviews of these books at this time. However, anyone interested in investigating them further should write: General Publishing Co. Ltd.
30 Lesmill Rd.
Don Mills, Ont.
Canada
M3B 2T6

The Rehabilitation Engineering Society of North America is holding a conference at the Sheraton Washington hotel in Washington, D.C., August 30 through September 3.

BCI will be represented, occupying display booth 132 and perhaps presenting a paper. Visitors should also make a special effort to stop by booth 147. This area belongs to the Swedish Institute of Technology who hope to present a paper and demonstrate synthetic speech with Blissymbolics. For more information contact:

1981 RESNA Conference
Convention Management Consultants
5401 Kirkman Road, Suite 550
Orlando, Fla. 32805 U.S.A.
Phone (305) 351-2592

Author visits BCI staff

Elizabeth Helfman, author of the recently released book *Blissymbolics: Speaking Without Speech*, visited the BCI office in May. Staff congratulated Elizabeth on her fine effort and held a special tea in her honor.



Elizabeth Helfman signs a copy of her new book for Penny Parnes of BCS.

BCI would like to take this opportunity to recommend *Blissymbolics: Speaking Without Speech*. The book is aimed at young readers and Elizabeth manages an excellent combination; through the use of story-telling, she is able to both entertain and inform her readers.

Elizabeth hopes that her book will open the eyes of young people to the problems of the communicatively-impaired and perhaps stir interest in pursuing related careers.

A more detailed account of *Blissymbolics: Speaking Without Speech* is provided in the current issue of the Newsletter.

The book is available for \$10.95 (US) from the following publisher:
Clark-Irwin Limited
791 St. Clair Ave. W.
Toronto, Ont.
M6C 1B8
Phone (416) 654-3211

Staff update

Beth Johns to Symbol Officer in training, Symbol Office, Shirley McNaughton to Director of BCI.



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The Bulletin is a publication for the staff and associate members of the Blissymbolics Communication Institute. Editor, Carol Barrett

Send letters, suggestions and news items to:

Editor
Blissymbolics Communication Institute
350 Rumsey Rd.
Toronto, Ontario
Canada
M4G 1R8